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The extent of student use of college health services at the University of Missouri, Columbia from July 1, 1963 through June 20, 1968--a period when enrollment increased rapidly--was investigated in this study. Data were obtained from records of the Health Service and Registrar's Office. Answers were sought to 3 questions: Did increased enrollment affect the proportion of the student body using the health service? Did differences occur in the use of the health service by male and female students in proportion to their membership in the student body? Were there differences in the use of the student health service by male and female students within medical classifications? It was found that student use of the health service over the 6-year period was not significantly different from the rate of enrollment. Approximately 63% availed themselves of health services. Males and females tended to use the health service at a ratio similar to their proportion in the enrollment. The only exception was in the use of the health service for medical purposes: females used this service at a rate that was significantly higher than their ratio to males in the student population. Additional research is recommended on the image of the Health service, the type of services offered, and the effect of student housing on use of the health service. Tables are included. (JS)

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A COMPARISON OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITH THE STUDENT USE OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

By

Leroy A. Piccard

There are many people, both inside and outside the boundaries of the college campus, who claim that the purpose of a college is the pursuit of truth and knowledge and not the emotional or physical health of students. They are quick to acclaim that the goal is the achievement of high academic standards, not the coddling of young people. They also announce that college men and women should be mature enough to look after their own health while seeking the intellectual offerings of the institution. These advocates of instant maturity even have a ready made, if not somewhat paradoxical slogan: These youngsters have to grow up sooner or later so it might as well be sooner. Responsibility for their health, safety, and welfare is not ours; they should know enough to take care of themselves.

The appropriateness of a statement of whether or not the health of students is of concern to the college officials as well as to the individual student seems to lie in the use made of the college health service by the students for which it was created. In a survey of 1,157 colleges, Summerskill (1954) indicated that seventeen per cent of

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the colleges did not assume any formal responsibility what ever for the health of their students. It was found too, that an additional sixteen per cent of the colleges having health programs did not assume clinical care beyond common first aid. In a study conducted at Ohio State University, Solleder (1964) found that approximately thirty per cent of the student body made use of the health service. The average number of student visits to the health service was 322 per day; however, some of those were multiple users of the health service.

The amount of student use of the college health service, either as a patient or for preventive measures, will depend upon the services offered, the reputation, and the climate of the health service. Farnsworth (1964) stated that the perception of the health service depends upon the kind of background from which each student comes and the particular image that the health service in question presents to the academic community.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of the college health services over an extended period of time within which the enrollment of the institution experienced a rapid growth. The major questions asked were:

1. Did the increased enrollment of the institution affect the proportion of the student body availing itself of services offered by the student health service?

2. Did differences occur in the use of the student health service by male and female students in proportion to their membership in the student body?
3. Were there differences in the use of the student health service by male and female students within medical classifications?

Method

The data included students enrolled in the University of Missouri, Columbia, who made use of the health service during the period July 1, 1963 through June 20, 1968. The Chi Square Tests at the .01 level of significance was used to determine any proportional changes occurring in the use of the health service over the six year period. The six year block of time was used to control for enrollment shifts and for any single epidemic that may have occurred during the time span of a single year.

The data concerning the use of the health service was obtained from the files of the Health Service at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The enrollment figures for male, female, and total population was obtained from the Registrar's Office at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Results

The enrollment in the University of Missouri, Columbia increased from 14,052 students in 1962 to 19,409 students in 1967 (Table 1). The student use of the health service

increased from 7,781 students in 1962 to 13,602 students in 1967.

Insert Table 1 about here

The average increase in enrollment over the six year period was 883 students per year. At the same time the use of the health service increased at an average of 670 students per year.

The increase in enrollment did not significantly change the proportional use of the health service (Table 2). During the six school years 1962 to 1968, the university enrollment increased 72%. The use of the health service increased 74.81% over the same time period.

Insert Table 2 about here

For each of the six years the rate of difference between enrollment and use of the health service did not vary more than 2% for any specific year.

The use of the health service by sex (Table 3) did not show any significant differences over the six year time span. It is interesting to note, however, that the use of the health service by sex changed 1.72% while the enrollment proportions changed 3.99% over the total period.

Insert Table 3 about here

It was found that as the proportions in the enrollment changed, the proportional use of the health service changed at an equivalent rate but on opposite vectors.

The use of the health service by sex when categorized into major health classifications did show a significant difference for one of the three classifications (Table 4). It was found that the females used the health service for medical purposes at a rate that was significantly higher than the males in proportion to their numbers in the student population. The female students used the health service at a rate 18.91% higher than their expected frequency when compared to the male students.

Insert Table 4 about here

There were no significant differences found between male and female student users of the health service in the orthopedical and surgical areas.

Discussion

The use of the health service by students enrolled in the University of Missouri, Columbia remained at a ratio that was not significantly different to the rate of enrollment. It is interesting to note that approximately 63% of

the student population used the health service at the University of Missouri, Columbia; while at Ohio State University, Solleder found that approximately 33% of the students used the health service.

Males and females tend to use the health service at a ratio that is similar to their proportion in student enrollment. The only exception was found in the medical area; females used this service at a rate that was significantly higher than their ratio to males in the student population.

It is recommended, by this author, that additional research be done on college and university health services to determine if the image of the service, type of services offered, and mode of student housing have any affect upon the use of the health service.

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Table 1

The Student Enrollment and the Use of the Health Service During the Period 1962-1968

Source	62-63	63-64	64-65	65-66	66-67	67-68
University Enrollment	14,052	14,696	15,289	16,867	17,850	19,407
Use of Health Service	7,781	8,629	9,322	10,210	12,234	13,602

Table 2

Ratings on Use of the Health Service

as Compared to Enrollment Over a Six-year Time Span

Ratings	62-63	63-64	64-65	65-66	66-67	67-68
Student use of the Health Service						
Exp.	14.4%	14.4%	15.7%	17.8%	18.4%	19.8%
Obs.	12.8%	14.1%	15.2%	16.7%	19.8%	21.4%

Chi Square = .0384, d.f. = 5, n.s. .01

Table 3

Ratings on Use of Health Service

by Sex Over a Six-year Time Span

Ratings	62-63	63-64	64-65	65-66	66-67	67-68
Male						
Exp.	67.4%	66.1%	66.0%	65.5%	64.4%	63.8%
Obs.	66.0%	66.2%	66.2%	64.9%	67.3%	67.7%
Female						
Exp.	32.4%	33.9%	34.0%	34.5%	35.6%	36.2%
Obs.	34.0%	33.8%	33.8%	35.1%	32.7%	32.3%

Chi Square = .0911, d.f. = 5, n.s. .01

Table 4

Ratings on Use of the Health Service

by Sex for Major Medical Classifications

Ratings		Male	Female
Medical	Exp.	66.5068%	33.4932%
	Obs.	47.5981%	52.4019%
Surgical	Exp.	66.5068%	33.4932%
	Obs.	67.3722%	32.6228%
Orthopedical			
	Exp.	66.5068%	33.4932%
	Obs.	76.3157%	23.6843%

Chi Square Medical = 7.151, d.f. = 1, sign. .01

Chi Square Surgical = .0337, d.f. - 1, n.s. .01

Chi Square Orthopedical = 4.328, d.f. = 1, n.s. .01